

REMARKS

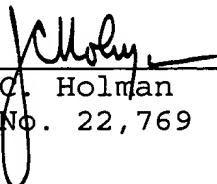
Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks contained in the Amendment of December 9, 2002, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the present application, as they now stand, patentably distinguish over the references cited and applied by the Examiner and are, therefore, in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

JACOBSON HOLMAN, PLLC

By:


John C. Holman
Reg. No. 22,769

400 Seventh Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004-2201
(202) 638-6666

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JLS/dmt